

Appraiser gets five years' probation

Official who handled North Brunswick's property reassessment filed false time sheets **PAGE 36**

Middlesex

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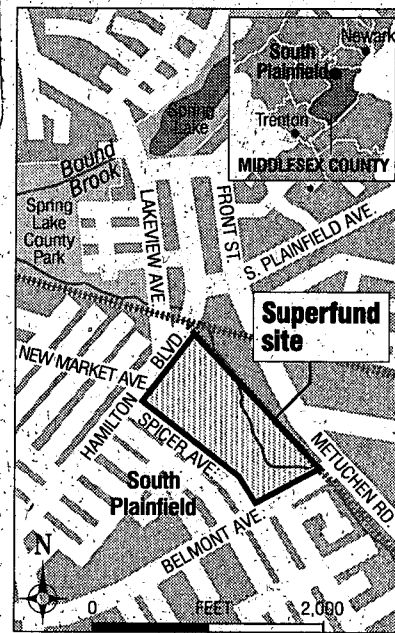
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The Star-Ledger

Stores planned at tainted S. Plainfield site

By Towanda Underdue

STAR-LEDGER STAFF



A contaminated South Plainfield industrial park that is on the federal Superfund list may be transformed into a neighborhood shopping center if borough officials support a redevelopment plan for the 27-acre tract.

Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Inc. and the Dana Corp. will ask the mayor and borough council on Thursday to support a \$7 million plan to raze three remaining factory buildings at Hamilton Industrial Park and build a retail center.

Cornell-Dubilier and Dana would first clean up the tract to meet federal health standards, then solicit developers to create a small park, one acre of retail stores, a large self-storage facility, an office building and warehouses and 350 parking spots.

Six acres would remain as open space.

"We're pursuing this idea because we don't think it makes any sense for that property to undergo years and years and years of cleanup without any future development in sight," said Monica Conyngham, a Washington, D.C., attorney representing Dana.

"It's a win to try to accelerate this," Conyngham said.

Mayor Dan Gallagher said he would not support any redevelopment without some assurances the property would be properly cleaned and a shopping center would not cause traffic congestion.

"It is very underutilized and I certainly agree that it has prospects, but I'd like to be certain first that they are cleaning it up," Gallagher said.

State health officials, in 1987

found the Hamilton Industrial Park was contaminated with carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyls and ordered the property owner, DSC of Newark Corp., to pave over soil so the contaminants would not spread. But some testing a few years ago revealed that the substances had spread to 13 homes in the area.

A few years ago, the federal Environmental Protection Agency ordered the responsible parties — Cornell-Dubilier, DSC and Dana Corp. — to pay \$1 million for soil removal and restoration. Since then, the companies have removed contaminated soil from around the homes, said EPA remedial project manager Pete Mannino.

The site now consists of three, two-story buildings with some busted window panes and chipped paint. Bushes have sprouted through a chain-link fence, and dozens of offices

are unoccupied. There are 15 businesses on the sprawling tract and 100 employees, but signs warn pedestrians to steer clear of certain areas.

The site should be redeveloped because it is an eyesore, said Victor Jordao, owner of the Pizza Stop on Hamilton Boulevard.

"It would look better than it looks right now," said Jordao, whose shop is across the street. "We'd have more people around here and that would be better for business."

Councilman Jim Vokral said he also wants the site redeveloped.

"Obviously, anything that will enhance us with our cleanup of the site is worth our while," Vokral said. "I think a neighborhood shopping center is worth looking into."

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